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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program (Min Comp) conducted in Seattle, Washington, public schools in 1979-80, and presents the results of a survey administered to school principals and program managers to assess the program's operation and effectiveness. Survey results cover several areas including: (1) the identification of students with minimum competencies deficiencies; (2) number of students identified and provided remediation; and (3) educational resource and instructional strategies used to serve skill-deficient students. In addition, comments by school officials on program funding, operation, tests, and coordination are provided. (APM)

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MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS SURVEY RESULTS

REPORT NO. 80-13
MARCH 1981

T. J. VASSAR

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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1979-80 MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS SURVEY RESULTS

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1979-80 MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS SURVEY RESULTS

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SUMMARY

On December 5, 1979 the Seattle School Board established the guidelines for the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program (Min Comp). These guidelines include: 1) passage of a Minimum Competencies Performance Test as a graduation requirement beginning with the 1981-82 high school class, 2) building early identification and remediation procedures into the Min Comp Program, and 3) coordination of the Min Comp Program with other components of the District program.

In May, 1980 a survey was administered to principals and program managers to assess the 1979-80 operation of Min Comp from their perspective and to gather information and insights for planning subsequent program operations. The major findings resulting from the Min Comp survey were:

1. Students in grades 3, 6 and 9 are screened for minimum competencies deficiencies on the Min Comp General Screening Tests and by other measures such as the California Achievement Test. However, not all schools use the General Screening Test to screen students for minimum competencies deficiences, although most students will be required to pass the Minimum Competencies Performance Test as a graduation requirement for the 1981-82 school year.

2. Secondary school principals whose buildings receive funds specifically for their minimum competencies programs generally reflect positive attitudes about the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. Principals and program managers whose programs do not receive Min Comp funds are more critical of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program and think less of its instructional value.

3. Many principals and program managers interpret the School Board policy regarding minimum competencies as requiring curriculum and instruction components in addition to the baseline program. If this interpretation is correct they may continue to regard minimum competencies remediation as an impossible task without additional resources. However, if the intent of the minimum competencies policy is to add further specificity to the existing curriculum and thus to clarify responsibilities of baseline instructional staff in the form of some minimum student performance standards, some principals and program managers misunderstand the policy.

   It is therefore recommended that policy clarification be provided to District managers in order to assure that the Board's intent is carried out with respect to students in all schools and programs.

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1979-80 MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS SURVEY RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Program Development

During the 1960's, school districts began to formulate minimum competency programs as a response to the educational accountability movement. In 1969-70 several Seattle high schools and their PTA's became concerned about developing a test that demonstrated students could perform certain fundamental tasks before graduating from the school district. As directed by the Superintendent, the Basic Skills Department began building the components of a Minimum Competencies Program in the late sixties and early seventies. A committee of parents, teachers, and administrators developed a list of sixteen basic tasks which required mathematics, reading, and English competencies identified as being necessary for an individual to succeed at the minimum level upon graduating from the public schools. Screening tests designed to identify students with basic skills deficiencies were developed, and during the 1975-76 school year were administered to all tenth grade students.

In July, 1977 the Seattle School Board specified successful completion of a minimum competencies performance test as a requirement for graduation from the Seattle Public Schools. On December 5, 1979 the Board refined the action taken in 1977 through the following motion regarding the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program (Min Comp). The Board mandated that:

1. Successful passage of a Minimum Competencies Test be retained as a graduation requirement beginning with the 1981-82 school year.

2. Staff be directed to prepare a plan for administering the test at an earlier grade than the 11th grade for implementation as soon as feasible.

3. Staff be directed to build into the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program early identification and remediation procedures.

4. Staff be directed to coordinate the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program with other components of the District program such as District Curriculum, Student Learning Objectives (SLO's), Compensatory/Remedial Programs, etc.

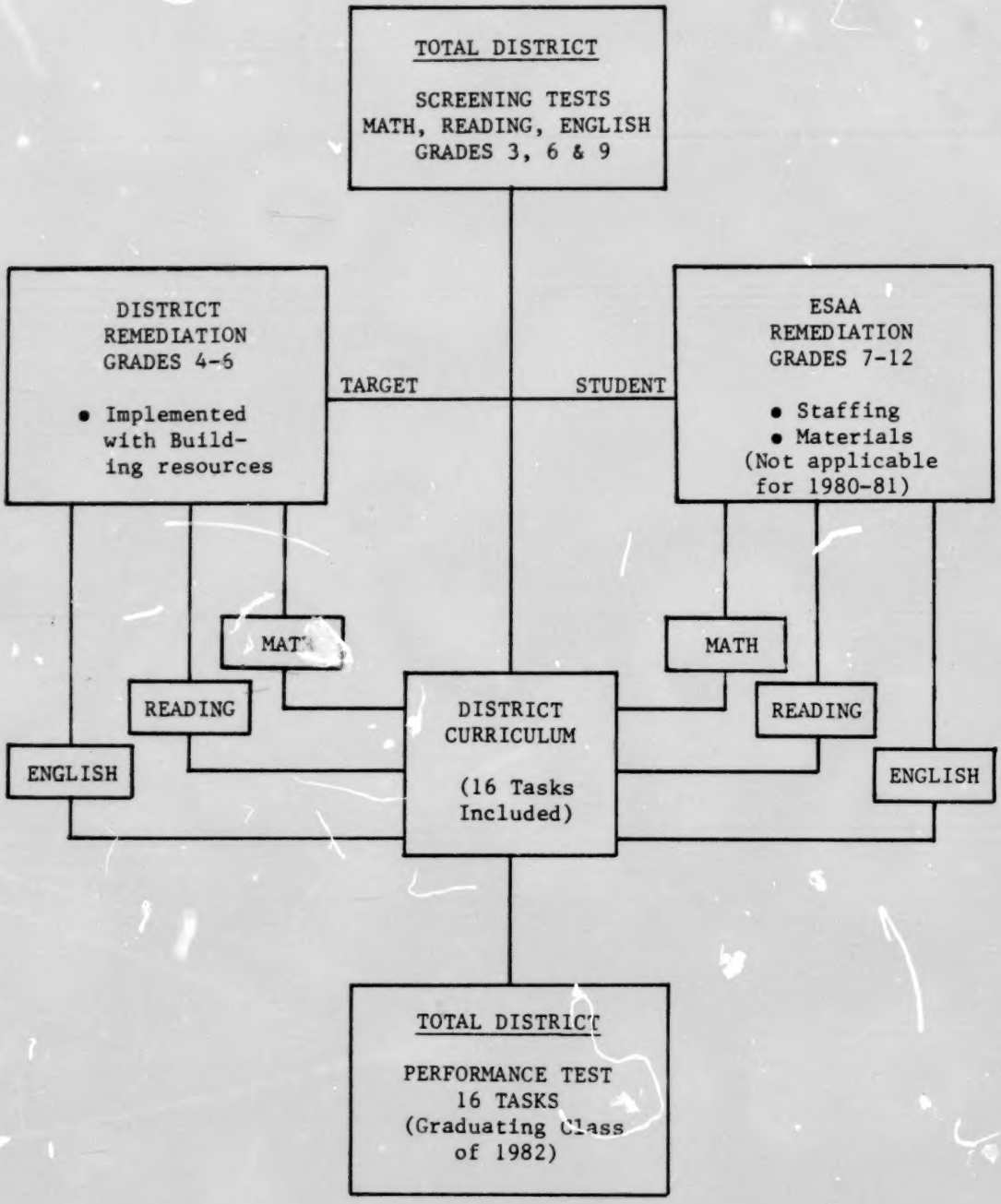
5. No diploma be given to a regular program student who does not pass the Test.

6. Staff be directed to assess the needs of students with limited English speaking ability in relationship to the Minimum Competencies requirement.

7. Staff be directed to monitor state and national developments regarding graduation and minimum competencies requirements for

FIGURE 1

SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT MINIMUM COMPETENCIES
ASSURANCE PROGRAM*
(District and ESAA)
1979-80



* Developed by the Office of Grants and Compensatory Programs

Special Education students; to review the situation with the Board in January, 1980, and to present a specific recommendation on District procedure as directed at that time.

8. Staff be directed to continue to assess the legal issues involved.[1]

Administration of the Min Comp Program

During the 1979-80 school year, two supervising teachers coordinated Min Comp efforts under the direction of the Director of Grants and Compensatory Education. One teacher was primarily responsible for secondary schools and the other supervising teacher worked more closely with the administration and development of Min Comp tests and the coordination of elementary programs.[2]

Description of Min Comp

The 1979-80 Minimum Competencies Assurance Program contains three components: screening processes, the Performance Test and remediation efforts (see Figure 1). The first component includes the Min Comp General Screening Tests as one of the early identification systems built into the Min Comp program referred to in point No. 3 of the School Board motion. The General Screening Tests contain English, math, and reading subtests, and are usually administered during the spring of the third, sixth and ninth grades. These tests are distributed and collected by the Office of Grants and Compensatory Education. The English subtests which require writing samples are scored by the same office. The Testing Office then sends the remaining sections of the test to data processing for scoring in much the same manner as standardized tests. Other measures such as the California Achievement Test and teacher assessments are also used to screen students for minimum competencies deficiences.

The second component of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program is the Minimum Competencies Performance Test. Passage of this test is currently a requirement for graduation for the 1981-82 high school class and all subsequent graduating classes. This Performance Test is designed to assure that Seattle Public School graduates are able to minimally perform fourteen of sixteen basic tasks which require math, reading, and English skills. The Performance Test will be administered in the tenth and eleventh grades, and students failing any section will have two additional opportunities to retake the section(s) of the test first failed. Students who fail the Performance Test three times will be enrolled in a Minimum Competencies class to remedy deficient skills.

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1 Historical information on the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program comes from past Seattle School Board minutes and from a Fall, 1975 Basic Skills Department report entitled A Synopsis and Overview of the Seattle Minimum Competencies Assurance Program - Experimental Project.

2 Responsibility for Min Comp shifted from the Basic Skills Department to the Office of Grants and Compensatory Education as a consequence of School District administrative reorganizations. Administrative responsibility for Min Comp shifted from the Office of Grants and Compensatory Education as a consequence of the recent Spring 1980 administrative reorganization. The Director of Curriculum and Program Services currently (1980-81) has managerial responsibility for the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program.

The Minimum Competencies Performance test was field tested for the third and final time during the Fall of 1980. A subsequent report of the final field test was recently released in February 1981.

Remediation constitutes the remaining component of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. Students identified via the General Screening Tests and other measures are scheduled for remediation beginning in the fourth grade. The type of remediation received by students is generally left up to each building. Min Comp remediation efforts were funded in two different ways. The Seattle School District's 1979-80 ESAA Title VII grant provided funds specifically for Min Comp remediation efforts in twenty-three secondary schools and five non-public schools. (The Title VII Min Comp funded secondary schools were primarily junior and senior high schools. Compensatory education funds for the middle schools were provided through the Basic Skills Impact Model (BSIM), also a Title VII funded project. The latter funds (BSIM) were not specifically designated for Min Comp activities.)

Elementary schools, and all other buildings and programs which did not receive Title VII minimum competencies funds utilized whatever resources existing within their buildings to remedy student skill deficiencies.

The purpose of this report is to assess the 1979-80 operation of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program as perceived by principals and program managers.

Procedure

The Minimum Competencies Assurance Program Principal and Program Managers Survey (See Appendix C) was developed and administered cooperatively by the Evaluation Office and the Office of Grants and Compensatory Education. The survey was developed by the Evaluation Office and the cover memorandum explaining the intent and purpose of the survey was developed by the Office of Grants and Compensatory Education. The methods used to administer the survey were mutually agreed upon by each office. Both offices helped disseminate and collect the surveys. The Evaluation Office compiled and analyzed the survey results.

The Minimum Competencies Assurance Program survey was distributed during May, 1980. The survey was designed and administered to:

- Determine the methods used by buildings and programs to identify students with minimum competencies deficiencies;
- Determine the intervention strategies and resources used for remediation;
- Determine perceived impediments to effective intervention; and
- Solicit principals' comments regarding the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program.

The survey was distributed through area consortia meetings to all elementary and secondary principals, and special program managers.[3] Those programs absent from consortia meetings were provided surveys through the school mail. Because the survey was distributed and collected during these meetings, responses were generally concise. This distribution method resulted in a 95% return rate for elementary surveys and a 96% return rate for secondary surveys. Thus, reported results can be viewed with confidence as representing the perspectives of most principals and program managers.

Surveys were also distributed to the non-public schools participating in the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program through ESAA Title VII. Information from four of the non-public schools (reported on two surveys) is included in this report. These schools are St. Mary Immaculate, St. Theresa, St. George and St. Edwards; all are K-8 schools.

The schools surveyed are grouped in four categories according to the grade configurations of the buildings. The four school groups are: secondary, intermediate (includes K-5, K-6 and 4-6 grade levels), primary (includes K-2 and K-3 grade levels), and special programs (includes non-public schools). Elementary schools are divided into separate groups because the remedial focus of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program actually begins in the fourth grade. As stated earlier, third grade students take the Minimum Competencies General Screening Test near the end of the school year, hence remediation based upon the results of this test cannot begin until the following year when students enter the fourth grade. In schools paired or triaded according to the Seattle Plan, promotion from the third grade to the fourth grade often requires students to leave one school and enter another. Administration of the Minimum Competencies General Screening Test (GST) and any consequent remedial efforts based on the GST are also divided between the third and fourth grades. In this study, the elementary grade configurations are therefore separated into two groups so that buildings with similar kinds of involvement are grouped together.[4]

The survey results are discussed according to the five survey topic areas which are:

1. Min Comp student identification
2. Percentage of students failing the Min Comp Screening Tests
3. Percentage of students provided remediation

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3 For the purposes of this report, Special Programs include the following: Alternative Elementary #1; American Indian Heritage High School; Inter Agency Programs (Career Intern Program, Eastlake Learning Center, Northwest Youth Service Bureau, Mt. Baker Youth Service Bureau, Youth Work Training Program, Youth Center Detention School); Follow Through Program; Gypsy Alternative School; Head Start; Interim's I, II and III; McGraw School (Seattle Children's Home); People's School #1; Project Interchange; Proyecto Saber; School-Age Parent Continuation Program; Work Training Program; Nova; Summit K-12; and Wilson/Pacific.

4 Though testing and remediation for minimum competencies deficiencies is not focused at the K-2 level, K-2 buildings were included in the survey to gather information about these schools since Min Comp is a Districtwide effort.

4. Building resources and strategies used for remediation
5. Respondents' comments regarding the Min Comp Program

A brief discussion follows each area. The Conclusion and Summary section summarizes the survey results and the Issues section highlights major Min Comp concerns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Min Comp Identification

As shown in Table 1 (Appendix A) respondents reported that several different combinations of approaches are used to identify students with minimum competencies deficiencies. The most frequently used approaches are the Minimum Competencies General Screening Tests (GST) and the California Achievement Tests (CAT). The CAT and the GST are used together as combined screening devices by 51% of the respondents. The GST is used by 83% of the respondents and is the most frequently used screening method. It is most frequently combined with other screening methods.

Eighteen schools other than K-2 buildings, indicate that they do not use the GST to identify students with minimum competencies deficiencies. The majority of these schools use standardized achievement tests, usually combined with teacher judgments. One intermediate school and one special program use teacher evaluations alone to identify skill deficient students. Two K-3 schools, one special program, and one all special education building indicate that they do not identify students for minimum competencies deficiencies.

Percentage of Students Failing Min Comp Screening Tests

Table 2 shows that 68% of the principals estimate that 20% or fewer of their students fail the Min Comp screening tests. (Special program managers estimate a higher failure rate for their students). This 20% failure estimate is about the same as the percentage of students scoring in the lower three stanines on standardized tests. However, whether the same students are identified by both measures has not yet been established.

Percentage of Students Provided Remediation

Table 3 (Appendix A), shows that most principals and program managers report that they provide skill deficient students with some type of remediation. However, one-fourth of the respondents indicate that 33% or fewer of their students that need help receive intervention. Table 4 (Appendix A), shows that of the reasons for not providing intervention, 56% of the responses cited insufficient resources. Elementary schools (intermediate and primary groups) list insufficient resources more than any other school group (over 70% of the elementary responses to this question list insufficient resources). Most principals and program managers who list insufficient resources as the reason their students are not provided remediation lack ESEA Title I, ESAA Title VII, or other categorical funding for remedial basic skills programs.

Resources and Strategies

As Table 5 (Appendix A) indicates, a variety of resources are used to serve skill deficient students. Half of the intermediate and primary elementary schools rely on Title I resources. Fifty-five percent of the secondary schools cite a reliance on ESAA Title VII to fund their remedial efforts.

Respondents also listed several different strategies to accomplish their minimum competencies remedial activities as shown in Table 6. The "pull out" strategy differs from regular classroom instruction in that the regular teacher provides the classroom instruction in the appropriate subject area and another staff person provides remedial instruction in the same subject exclusively to target students in a location outside the students' regular classroom. Half or more of the secondary and elementary schools use the pull out strategy. The majority (58%) of special programs use the regular classroom to provide students with remedial assistance. The regular classroom is the standard instructional delivery service normally provided by the school district.[5]

Respondents' Comments Regarding the Min Comp Program

A perusal of the comments contained in Appendix B provides further insights into the perceptions of principal and progam managers' attitudes about the Min Comp Program. The comments are compiled and grouped according to the following subjects:

- Min Comp funding
- Min Comp program operation and coordination
- Min Comp tests
- Miscellaneous

Of the sixty-four listed comments, thirty primarily refer to various aspects of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program's operation and coordination. The secondary school principals' comments reflect a more positive attitude towards Min Comp than elementary and special programs managers' comments. Many of the secondary schools use the pull out approach as a remediation strategy; however, the secondary comments express a preference for an alternative to the pull out approach.

The elementary school and special program comments express frustrations with Min Comp, which appear to stem from not knowing what additional activities they are required to fulfill regarding the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. These comments also expressed concerns about Min Comp testing (i.e., the General Screening Test's reliability is questioned, and suggestions were offered to adjust the administration of the GST to sometime before the spring.)

Summary and Conclusions

Most of the school district's secondary, elementary and special programs report that they are involved in the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. Primary programs for the most part provide identification and remediation activities in conjunction with established compensatory programs such as Title I. Students attending schools in grades 3, 6, and 9 are screened for academic deficiencies

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5 The definition for the "pull out" strategy and the "regular classroom" strategy are taken from the document, Seattle Public Schools, Long Range Educational Plan - Principals' Advisory Committee on Compensatory Education; (May 1980).

via the Min Comp General Screening Test, and other measures such as the California Achievement Test. It is noteworthy that not all schools identify students for minimum competencies deficiencies, although most students will be required to pass the Minimum Competencies Performance Test to complete their high school graduation requirements for the 1981-82 school year.

Principals and program managers generally estimate about 20% or less of their students fail the General Screening Test. The reason given most often why students are not provided intervention after failing this test is a lack of resources. Programs without categorical support are more likely than schools that receive these funds to declare insufficient resources as the reason why skill deficient students are not provided remediation.

Secondary school principals whose buildings receive funds specifically for their minimum competencies programs generally reflect positive attitudes about the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. Principals and program managers whose programs do not receive Min Comp funds are more critical of the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program and think less of its instructional value.

ISSUES

Information from the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program Principal and Program Managers' Survey raise more questions than this report is designed to answer about the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program. The following questions and subsequent discussions highlight major Min Comp issues:

1. What services are provided to schools other than services directly related to the administration of the Min Comp tests?

   Discussion:

   This question is pertinent because the school district literature on Min Comp describes this program as educational in focus and not designed solely as a testing program. However, comments from principals and program managers that do not receive ESAA Title VII Min Comp funds indicate that they often do not provide any additional instructional programs for students identified as deficient in minimum competencies skills. For example, the following excerpt from the principal and program managers comments contained in Appendix B is typical of many of the non-secondary group comments: "I would say there is only half a program - the diagnostic testing part. Since remediation is handled separately in buildings without direction, specific materials, etc., there is really no intervention program."

   On the other hand, the secondary school comments demonstrate specific educational ties to the central administration of Min Comp (junior and senior high schools receive funds through the ESAA Title VII Minimum Competencies Assurance Program). The secondary comments frequently refer to progress charts, goals and objectives, and specific remediation strategies. Respondents clearly indicate that Minimum Competencies Assurance Program instructional coordination exists within Title VII Min Comp funded schools to a greater extent than schools not receiving this type of funding.

2. Does the Minimum Competencies Assurance Program require a separate program effort to prepare students for graduation with at least minimum academic skills or should this preparation take place as a part of existing instructional programs?

   Discussion:

   It seems clear from both survey responses and narrative comments that many principals and program managers have interpreted School Board policy regarding minimum competencies as requiring curriculum and instruction components in addition to previously existing baseline educational efforts. If this interpretation is correct, those managers reporting difficulty in policy implementation due to a lack of supplementary resources may continue to treat minimum competencies remediation as an impossible task under their current budgets.

If, on the other hand, the intent of the minimum competencies policy is to add further specificity to the existing curriculum and thus to clarify responsibilities of baseline instructional staff in the form of some minimum student performance standards, some principals and managers misunderstand the policy.

It is therefore recommended that policy clarification be provided to District managers in order to assure that the Board's intent is carried out with respect to students in all schools and programs.

APPENDIX A

TABLES 1 THROUGH 6

TABLE 1

IDENTIFICATION METHODS USED BY INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY
AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS

Identification*	Secondary		Intermediate		Primary		Special Programs		Overall Usage	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GST, CAT, TE	8	31	29	52	2	18	3	25	42	40
GST, CAT	1	4	8	14	2	18	1	8	12	11
GST, TE	10	38					3	25	13	12
CAT, TE			9	16	2	18			11	10
GST	6	23	6	11	4	36	4	33	20	19
CAT	1	4	3	5	1	9			5	5
TE			1	2			1	8	2	1
TOTAL	26	100	56	100	11	100	12	100	105	100

* CST - General Screening Test
CAT - California Achievement Test
TE - Teacher Evaluation

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS FAILING THE MINIMUM COMPETENCIES
GENERAL SCREENING TEST
AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS

Instructional Category	Percent Failing					Total Responses
	0 - 10%	11 - 20%	21 - 30%	31 - 40%	41 - 50%	
	N Schools	N Schools	N Schools	N Schools	N Schools	N Schools & Programs
Secondary	3	10	3	3	3	22
Intermediate	20	13	5	1	1	40
Primary	3	1				4
Special Programs	2		1	2	5	10
TOTAL	28	24	9	6	9	76

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS FAILING
THE GENERAL SCREENING TEST WHO
WERE PROVIDED REMEDIATION
AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS

Instructional Category	Percent Failing Provided Remediation			Total Responses
	0 - 33%	34 - 67%	68 - 100%	
Secondary	6	3	14	23
Intermediate	10	2	31	43
Primary	1	1	2	4
Special Programs	3	1	6	10
TOTAL	20	7	53	80

TABLE 4

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INTERVENTION BY INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS †

Reasons	Secondary		Intermediate		Primary		Special Programs		Total Reasons	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Student Transferred to Another School			2	10			1	20	3	6
Insufficient Resources	8	44	15	71	3	75	1	20	27	56
Student or Family Refusal	6	33					1	20	7	15
Scheduling Conflicts	2	11	1	5					3	6
Teacher Felt Remediation Unnecessary	1	6	3	14					4	8
Other	1*	6			1**	25	2***	40	4	8
Total Responses	18	100	21	100	4	100	5	100	48	100

* Student worked independently and passed the test.
** Test results sent to the fourth grade.
*** Alternative school individualized instruction.
† Some respondents listed two or more reasons.

TABLE 5

RESOURCES USED FOR INTERVENTION BY INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY
AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS †

Resources	Secondary		Intermediate		Primary		Special Programs		Total Resources	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Title I			34	49	6	50			40	30
URRD	2	6	3	4			5	29	10	8
Title VII (Min Comp)	18	55					3	18	21	16
Title VII (BSIM)	4	12	12	17	4	33			20	15
State Remediation Funds			6	9					6	5
CETA Aides			1	1					1	1
Volunteer Tutors			7	10	2	17			9	7
ESL			1	1					1	1
District	8	24	5	7			9	53	22	16
ESAA Title VII Pilot	1	3							1	1
Total Responses	33	100	70	100	12	100	17	100	132	100

† Some respondents listed two or more resources.

TABLE 6

STRATEGIES USED FOR INTERVENTION BY INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORIES
AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS †

Strategies	Secondary		Intermediate		Primary		Special Programs		Total Strategies	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pull-out	15	50	48	62	9	69	3	25	75	57
Elective	6	20							6	5
Regular Classroom	8	27	24	31	4	31	7	58	43	33
Tutoring							2	17	2	2
Challenge Class	1	3							1	1
Ability Grouping			2	3					2	2
Non-graded Reading			1	1					1	1
Remedial Specialists			1	1					1	1
Individualized Instructors			1	1					1	1
Total Responses	30	100	77	100	13	100	12	100	132	100

† Some respondents listed two or more strategies.

APPENDIX B

Principals and Program Managers

Comments

PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS' COMMENTS
ON THE MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
(Comments are quoted verbatim)

MIN COMP FUNDING:

Secondary

1. Imperative instructional aide be retained in order to continue program.

2. Need teacher staffing in order to accommodate the number of students coming to us in sophomore year with Min Comp deficiencies.

3. Large numbers of students not served because of insufficient room in the program.

   a. Priority is given to: (1) 7th grade not otherwise served, (2) 8th grades.

   b. Special educational kids, for ESL kids.

4. Middle schools need more staffing. Test data returned to the schools is useless. Item analysis would be helpful to teachers.

Intermediate

5. Minimum Competency, Minimum Funding, Minimum Impact.

6. We need more resources to use in meeting the need of students who do not pass the Minimum Competency Test.

7. The Minimum Competencies Assurance Program would not be a success if the District would discontinue funding the program with extra dollars for personnel and instructional materials. There would be no consistency, having to rely on any source in the building.

8. There is no money or staff provided for children who fail on Minimum Comp. What is the purpose of identifying these students if there is no program to follow it up?

9. We need resources for those students not covered by the formal programs indicated above (Title I, ESL, Bilingual).

10. Classroom and Title I teachers are aware of basic skill deficiencies and work on them as always. The minimum competency testing accomplishes little in view of no extra staff time available for remediation.

11. Makes little difference. Little or no funding available with classrooms.

12. We do need more provision for funding and follow through.

MIN COMP PROGRAM OPERATION AND COORDINATION:

Secondary

1. Cumbersome record keeping.

2. Need more clearly stated program goals at each level of instruction.

3. Goals and objectives are excellent.

4. Patterns (Pull Out and Elective) are not good models to use on junior high level. Staff selection for junior high level must include consideration of elementary level teachers.

5. We have one of the most successful Min Comp programs in Seattle covering both English, Language Arts and Math. This program is successful because we have two full-time teachers and an aide. We will not be able to provide for the needs of some 165 students next year unless we have the same staffing. At present we are scheduled to lose one full-time teacher and one aide.

6. The writing project was very worthwhile. This type of program would be nice to continue.

7. Good program that does help needy students. Would help if information from the elementary schools on who failed what was given to us earlier in the spring.

8. The program is growing and improving. The recent rewriting of the testing materials and progress charts to tie in more thoroughly with the 16 basic tasks, the District's Scope and Sequence, and general basic skills was an important step forward. I think the program could be improved by having even more instructional assistants working with the teachers and by having even more workshops for idea exchanges and to develop new ideas and explore a variety of learning modes for a higher rate of efficiency in working with even the most difficult students. I feel we have much more to do, and given the help of the administration, we can do it!

9. a. English and Math credits should be possible to give.

   b. Expectations of the program as expressed by the government proposal are unrealistic in our high school setting.

10. The remediation provided by _____; the Instructional Assistant for Minimum Competency is of utmost necessity and value to our students served by this program.

11. This is a valuable program in our building because it enables us to deal with students in small groups. Without Min Comp (Title VII) our building could not staff that type of intervention. The Min Comp students are progressing because of this type of intervention and therefore the program is a success at _____.

12. A pull out program creates problems with students and teachers in terms of continuity. It's difficult to maintain continuity, plus students feel as though they've missed something important while they were attending min-cap during regular class.

13. We like the Min Comp Program but believe the only way the students can progress is to be with the Min Comp L.A. teacher every day for L.A and Math.

14. Our students would be better served if they could have the Min Comp class instead of the regular Math or L.A. class rather than being pulled out.

15. The present pull out system does not work.

Intermediate

16. It doesn't seem that Mini-Comp screening should be required of IPP (Gifted) students.

    a. Individualized teachers should be required to document the intervention strategies of students failing Mini-Comp tests.

    b. Need follow-up system for those students moving into 5th and 6th grade.

17. Identifying third grades is helpful as we have time to do some remedial work by grade 6 if students don't move.

18. I would say there is only half a program - the diagnostic testing part. Since remediation is handled separately in buildings without direction, specific materials, etc., there is really no intervention program.

19. In the past we have received a sum of money to use for intervention materials for the identified students. I feel that it would be better to allow schools to select their own materials for these funds, rather than selecting from a narrow list.

20. Do away with program - meaningless - paper exercise. Overhead that can and should be eliminated.

21. The Achilles Heel is the lack of clear promotion/retention standards and the failure to hold students and parents responsible for reasonable effort.

22. Not worth the time for the follow-up value.

23. Makes little or no difference - we have designed our program to meet the special needs of students scoring in the lower three stanines. Next year we might not be able to offer the same degree of assistance, however.

24. Not fully understood as applies to elementary program.

25. We need the District to fulfill its promise of assistance for those children.

Primaries

26. There should be a better system of follow-through for these students who have a need for remedial help following the test at each grade level.

Special Programs

27. No continuity - no follow-up - no help a non-program.

28. Need more help from that office (Min Comp). Have not received any new information this school year.

29. The program has appeared to be poorly organized and coordinated. The District plan has not been clearly presented. The screening test probably is not valid (too many pass reading). The screening test, District intervention strategies, 16 tasks, and performance test do not appear to have any relationship to one another.

Non-Public

30. Because of the large number of students scheduled for intervention, we have adopted a two-week rotational schedule. We serve half our population for two weeks, then the other half for two weeks. This continues throughout the year. Regular classroom teachers favor this schedule, as it keeps their own program disruptions to a minimum.

MIN COMP TESTS

Intermediate

1. In my judgement it is superfluous testing. The CAT can identify the very low achievers as well or better than the Mini-Comp tests.

2. An effort should be made to combine Min Comp with CAT to whatever level possible. We need to cut back on testing.

3. I hope the results will be available before school is out this has always been a problem.

4. Students are over tested/program not totally defined. Materials need to be provided to regular classroom teachers.

5. Some score high and should be in program for help. Some low scorers are good students. Should we teach for test? Some schools need money to build programs.

6. Need to validate screening test.

7. Excellent to test but we don't have the necessary help-space-materials always to really meet the individual's needs.

Primaries

8. In a K-3 building, there is little time left after the Min Comp test is given and scored for anyone to do anything.

9. Do no get results back in time.

10. In our K-3 Early Childhood Center, children are tested in the spring. They are assigned to _____ in the fall, test results are sent there. Intervention related to this particular screening occurs with fourth grade upward.

11. The first Minimum competencies test is given at the end of Grade 3. We are a K-3 school. We do not get results of the test.

12. Pairs and triads K-3 programs - testing done at midpoint of grade 3 or possibly at beginning of grade 3 so that intervention can be done sooner in grade 3.

13. Give test earlier so intervention can be effective.

Special Programs

14. We use the screening instrument and some of the old diagnostic items to assess and prescribe student learning needs.

15. Let's not turn classrooms into test preparation sessions as has happened in other districts and states.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Secondary

1. Needed

Intermediate

2. Have no major problems with it.

3. Follow-up remediation serves.

4. Ineffective at elementary level.

Special Program

5. _____ is an all-school Magnet supplemented by Title VI within all classes, elective and activities.

6. (School) all special ed.

7. We have an interest-centered curriculum in which competencies are part of each activity.

Non-Public

8) Min Comp is effective and it works. My two main problems are:

   a. Trying to get parents to see the value of the program.

   b. Motivating students who have experienced failure for many years.

   c. Getting these students out of study habits that are detrimental to learning. More should be done in our curriculum and on the checklists concerning listening. I feel that this is one of the main reasons that our students don't succeed. Listening skills have not been developed.

APPENDIX C

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGERS SURVEY

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES ASSURANCE PROGRAM
PRINCIPAL AND PROGRAM MANAGER SURVEY

1. Building or Program Name _____.

2. Are students in your building identified for Minimum Competencies deficiencies?

   Yes _____ No _____

   If YES, by what strategies? General Screening Test _____
   California Achievement Test _____
   Teacher Evaluation _____
   Combinations of any or all of the above (specify)

   _____

   _____

   If NO, please explain _____

   _____

   _____

3. Estimate the percent of students who failed one or more sections of the General Screening Test in your building:

   Circle One: 5% or less 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% or more

4. Of the students who failed one or more sections of the General Screening Test estimate the percentage of students scheduled for intervention.

   Circle One: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

5. Of the students who failed one or more sections of the General Screening Test, why are some students not scheduled for intervention?

   _____

   _____

6. Of the students who receive special remediation services for Minimum Competencies deficiencies, what resources and intervention strategies are being used?

   Resources: Title I _____ Title VI (Min. Comp.) _____
   URRD _____ District _____
   Title VI (BSIM) _____ Other (specify) _____

   Strategies: Pull Out _____ Other(s) (Please specify)
   Elective _____ _____
   Intervention through regular classroom _____ _____

7. Please comment on any aspect of the District's Minimum Competencies Assurance Program.

   _____

   _____